

11-9-1879

Letter from Anne Whitney, Belmont, Massachusetts, to Adeline Manning, 1879 November 9

Anne Whitney

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Recommended Citation

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Friday Belmont. Nov 8. 1879.

My dear Adeline.

I drove home from the wedding yesterday P.M., drove off my festal garments & drove into other & then to the Station to take the 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ train - for as the horses' heads were away I knew they wanted me to help fill up a gap here.

There was a very large Company at the Sebes' - always coming & going during the hour after there - The wedding pair looked handsome & happy tho. Mr. S. did proclaim himself a victim - Flowers were in splendid profusion & in an upper room many splendid golden gifts - I tried to deliver your message - The latter part of it I know was cut off by fresh influxes - You would have hated such a crowd - & it is well you were not there.

Behold the grossness of high
Civilization! In our houses
our decoration our tables - our
company an all - encompassing
mess & mix - that blunts
the perceptions & leaves us
no power of discrimination or
rational enjoyment - If this
were only invented as a foil
by which to lighten the enjoyment
of the few moments of personal
interchange & communion - in
which ^{should have} ~~thought~~ ^{had} room to
move & feeling to expand it
might be worth the cost.
Let us so accept it - &
while the dinner is burning
warm our hands.

Stalked with Mr. Silsbee
& few minutes in the room
where the company dropped
in as each felt inclined for
refreshments - He pointed to
the costly lumber of the
table & said - It is a singular
thing that I have no taste -
youth & day it is the same.

my mouth is full of —
— sometimes he would have said —
but the right word did not come.
All things on that table are
the same to me — I am well —
I eat, but without appetite —
It is what we tend to in all
civilizations — I thought — we live
are outwardly well — but a
persecuting gourmandise is assailing
our palates — & the finer enjoyments
the subtler senses which need
time for development & activity
are slipping away from our
lives. That line of E. O. B.
comes to mind — "When we had
out from the cloud of steam
repainted white horses — Are
we greater than our fathers
who hid black ones by the
name?" Why yes — our philosophy
Herbert Spencer's — that is —
will tell us that the bells
multiply & grow in tone (perhaps)
that in short we are evolving —
& there is nothing more to be
said — on that subject. And
yet my thought holds — nor grows
for enjoyment — we must be able to
move freely in an air of Space

a Time. To see things we need
to get away from them - The
summer but the City takes
I mean the City we know -
would seem to be a provision
for this great want - But
all changes to this complexion,
the best is no longer best - but
search for a new direction
if we seek to save our
lives whole in the midst of
the medley we shall easily
be set aside & so curtailed
What to do? After in the
desert of love & side goes
will till the mighty Rhinoceros
the wild ass & the timorous
Gazelle get too much for us.
Seven mind - we shall not
get there directly if we
only find time to care for
each other.

Called at the Fields
before they went (Thursday)
to Baltimore - She asked me
if I gave her love to you & I told
her she did not send it - &c. &c.
She looked as if I must have been
mistaken -